



96-45

ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

Charles E. Fisher
Executive Director

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

November 13, 1996

Mr. Vernon O. Crawley
President
Moraine Valley Community College
10900 South 88th Avenue
Palos Hills, Illinois 60465

Dear Mr. Crawley:

Thank you for your letter regarding affordable telecommunications for libraries, schools, community colleges, and higher education.

Let me first assure you that the Commerce Commission strongly supports efforts to merge telecommunications technology with educational initiatives. To facilitate this, the Commission has encouraged telephone companies in Illinois to offer special interactive video learning tariffs to educational institutions, as authorized last year by Public Act 89-141.

As you correctly state in your letter, the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 specifically requires in Section 254 (h)(1)(B) that:

"all telecommunications carriers serving a geographic area shall, upon receiving a bona fide request for any of its services...provide such services to elementary schools, secondary schools, and libraries for educational purposes at rates less than the amounts charged for similar services to other parties. The discount shall be an amount that the Commission (FCC), with respect to interstate services, and the States, with respect to intrastate services, determine is appropriate and necessary to ensure affordable access to and use of such services by such entities."

As you also have noted, Section 254(h)(5)(A) appears to preclude colleges and universities from universal service provisions. It is unclear how much latitude the FCC and the Federal-State Joint Board will have to expand this definition to colleges and universities.

Your letter indicated Moraine Valley Community College has established numerous distance learning sites with area hospitals. Depending on curriculum, Section 254(h)(5)(B)(i) may establish Moraine Valley Community College as a health care provider, thereby qualifying Moraine Valley Community College for universal service support.

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Mr. Vernon O. Crawley

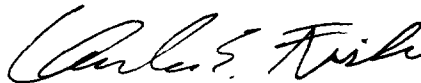
November 13, 1996

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To date, rules on universal service have not been promulgated at the federal level. When they are promulgated states may adopt regulations not inconsistent with the FCC rules to preserve and advance universal service.

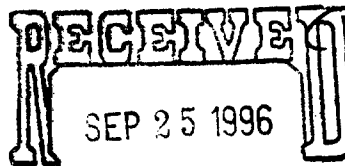
I will be happy to forward your recommendations to the FCC and Federal-State Joint Board. It is my hope that the deregulation of the telecommunications industry will indeed increase competition in providing local and long distance services which will help reduce prices throughout Illinois and benefit all Illinois students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles E. Fisher".

Charles E. Fisher
Executive Director

✓cc: Chairman Reed Hunt



Vernon O. Crawley
President

September 18, 1996

ILLINOIS COMMERCE
COMMISSION

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS DIVISION
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION
TELECOMMUNICATIONS DIVISION
Moraine Valley
Community College

Charles E. Fisher, Executive Director
Illinois Commerce Commission
527 East Capitol
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Director Fisher:

I am writing in strong support of meaningful discounts for schools, colleges, universities, and libraries as the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal-State Joint Board implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

In passing this landmark legislation, Congress acknowledged the importance of technology in the economic future of this nation. Furthermore, the Act recognizes the important link between schools' access to technology and their ability to prepare future workers for a competitive global economy. The Act makes it possible for educational institutions, libraries, hospitals, and clinics to have access to advanced telecommunication services at an "affordable rate."

However, the Act fails to specifically mention colleges and universities as eligible for these affordable rates. Instead, the Act defines "educational institutions" as K-12 entities. The FCC has the power to expand this definition to include institutions of higher education, and I strongly encourage them to do so.

To adequately train and prepare this nation's future workforce, institutions of higher education, such as Moraine Valley Community College, must have access to telecommunications services at a discounted rate. Ensuring affordability of telecommunications is essential for this college and the community it serves. Currently, Moraine Valley is integrating the Internet into its academic curriculum. In addition, the college has established numerous distance learning sites with area colleges and hospitals. It is our intention to continue these endeavors as a means to provide more citizens with a quality education that is both accessible and affordable. However, if the FCC fails to grant colleges and universities access to the "affordable rates" mentioned in the Act, we would be forced to discontinue many, if not all, of these services.

As a community college, Moraine Valley has a tremendous impact in our district. We are often called upon to retrain workers who have either lost their jobs or whose skills have become obsolete. Affordable access to technology is an essential component of these programs as well as other services provided by the college.

I encourage the FCC to expand the definition of "educational institutions" to include colleges and universities. In doing so, you assure that our nation's citizens will have the training and education necessary to compete in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Moraine Valley Community College

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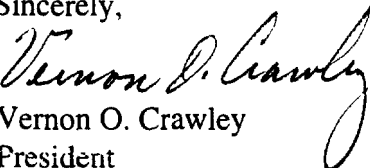
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Charles E. Fisher
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September 18, 1996

I respectfully request your support, and please convey these recommendations to the FCC and the Federal-State Joint Board. Thank you for your attention to this matter of considerable importance to all educational institutions and citizens in Illinois.

Sincerely,


Vernon O. Crawley
President

STATE OF ILLINOIS



ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

Charles E. Fisher
Executive Director

October 31, 1996

Mr. Vernon O. Crawley
President
Moraine Valley Community College
10900 South 88th Avenue
Palos Hills, Illinois 60465

Dear Mr. Crawley:

I received your letter dated September 18, 1996, regarding universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, particularly as they relate to colleges and universities. I understand the role of institutions of higher education, and agree that the training and preparation of this nation's work force will be facilitated by telecommunications services. I also understand that colleges and universities, such as Moraine Valley Community College, require rates for telecommunications services that are affordable.

Review of the Telecommunications Act, particularly Section 254(h)(5)(A), indicates that universal service provisions for educational providers is intended for elementary and secondary schools. It is unclear how much latitude the FCC and the Federal-State Joint Board will have to expand this definition to institutions of higher learning.

Your letter indicates Moraine Valley Community College has established numerous distance learning sites with area hospitals. Depending on curriculum, Section 254(h)(5)(B)(i) may establish Moraine Valley Community College as a health care provider, thereby qualifying Moraine Valley Community College for universal service support.

Hopefully this information will be of interest to you, and be assured this Commission values the input of all of its constituents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Charles E. Fisher".

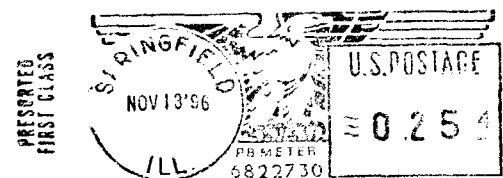
Charles E. Fisher
Executive Director

Illinois Commerce Commission

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Reed E. Hundt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
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Washington, DC. 20554



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